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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [CT](#)
SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - BANGUI

REF: State 074840

¶1. (U) This is Embassy Bangui's response to State 074840, regarding general conditions fraud, and consular fraud issues in the Central African Republic.

Country Conditions

¶2. (U) The Central African Republic (CAR) is a landlocked country of 4.5 million people, ranked among the least developed countries with an annual per capita income of USD 700 (2008). Its economy is based mainly on agriculture, diamonds and forestry. Diamonds are the country's principal export, but some gold is also mined and uranium exploration projects continue. Nearly self-sufficient in food production, the CAR has the potential to become a net exporter of agricultural products. However, the CAR's economy suffers from the country's landlocked position, which isolates it from foreign suppliers and markets and contributes to high import prices. The CAR is believed to have petroleum deposits along its border with Chad which could be exploited. It also has hydroelectric potential that could be developed to export electricity to neighboring countries.

¶3. (SBU) The Government of the Central African Republic (CARG) is weak and suffers from four separate rebellions stretching along the north of the country. The country held presidential and legislative elections in 2005, judged credible by the international community and domestic observers. Former coup leader Francois Bozize was elected President in a May 2005 run-off election, bringing to end two years of transitional process. In early December 2004, citizens overwhelmingly approved a new constitution by referendum. The Central African Republic remains one of the poorest countries in the world with an economy in a state of collapse after years of civil unrest and corruption. The current President has appointed several family members to key positions within the government, which has brought marked criticism from local and international observers. In addition, public salary arrears stemming from insufficient public revenues and probable corruption within the CARG have caused intermittent but persistent strikes by public sector workers. Rebellions in the NW and NE prefectures began shortly after the 2005 election, and rebel forces remain control of large swaths of the northern countryside. Repeated CARG efforts to reform government services, improve revenue collection, pay salaries regularly, and end corruption and impunity have failed, calling into question the CARG's political will to implement reform.

¶4. (SBU) Embassy Bangui currently operates with four (4) American Officers and its Consular services include limited American Citizen Services only. Post judges that there is a high level of document and identity fraud in the Central African Republic.

NIV Fraud

¶5. (U) Embassy Bangui does not issue visas, including NIVs, and does not actively monitor NIV fraud.

IV Fraud

¶6. (U) Embassy Bangui does not issue visas, including IVs, and does not actively monitor IV fraud.

DV Fraud

¶7. (U) Embassy Bangui does not issue visas, including DVs, and does not actively monitor DV fraud.

ACS and U.S. Passport Fraud

¶18. (SBU) Embassy Bangui adjudicates limited passport applications with the cooperation and support of the U.S. Embassy in Yaounde, Cameroon. These applications are scrutinized by the Vice-Consul at Post, and documents whose veracity is in doubt are verified by the Consular Assistant at the originating office in Bangui. Applications are forwarded to Yaounde, where name-checking and other checks are performed on the applicants and the applications are entered into the ACS+ system. Approximately eight U.S. passports were adjudicated during the reporting period using this system.

Adoption Fraud

¶19. (U) Embassy Bangui did not handle any cases of American citizens adopting Central African children in 2008.

Use of DNA Testing

¶10. (U) Embassy Bangui is aware of only one institution which can perform DNA testing in the CAR: the Institut Pasteur in Bangui. Post did not require or receive DNA testing results for any of its limited Consular functions during the reporting period.

Asylum and other DHS Benefit Fraud

¶11. (U) Embassy Bangui does not issue visas, including asylum cases, and does not actively monitor asylum or DHS fraud.

¶12. (U) Embassy Bangui monitors trafficking-in-persons networks in the CAR, including child and child-labor trafficking, sex trafficking, and labor trafficking. There are significant instances of child labor in the country, mostly in subsistence agriculture and some in the diamond mining sector. Many of the child trafficking networks in the country are informal, family-based networks, in which poor relatives and/or rural children are sent to live with extended family members and used as servants or manual laborers. The CAR is a source and transit country for child trafficking and for sex trafficking, though

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Post has little information on the scale or scope of the problem. The CAR is a very significant source of false foreign documents, but Post has little information as to whether the CAR citizens have used these documents to gain fraudulent entry into the United States or to other countries. Post is not aware of the circulation of false U.S. passports in the CAR. Post is not aware of terrorist travel through the CAR.

DS Criminal Fraud Investigations

¶13. (U) Embassy Bangui does not have a resident RSO, but receives periodic visits from the RSO in N'Djamena, Chad, who has regional responsibilities. Cooperation between the RSO and the Consular section in Bangui is good, and has allowed for continued cooperation in visa referrals and American Citizen Services. Because Post does not issue visas, Bangui's Consular section did not make any fraud referrals in the reporting period.

CAR Passports:

¶14. (U) Regular passports: The CARG has not started issuing biometric passports yet. Regular passports are typewritten. The first inside page contains the information regarding the bearer of the passport and is laminated. The ID photo is printed, but it is glued at the right corner and the front page.

Regular CAR passports are issued by the Immigration Service which is under the Ministry of Interior and the passport is signed by the Minister himself. Although they are not biometric, they remain valid for travel to Europe. The Government is not able to maintain a permanent stock of passports because of financial difficulties. It happens that no passport has been issued for a period of 3 to 5 months because they are out of stock or the computer is out of order

¶15. (U) Official and diplomatic passports (Passeport de Service & Passeport Diplomatique): This category of passports is issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is entirely handwritten.

(NOTE: Diplomatic/official passport issuance is not under surveillance, and almost anyone can apply and obtain a CAR official/diplomatic passport. Many CAR applicants who have no claim to diplomatic or official status receive diplomatic or official passports. Some CAR diplomatic passport holders may only have tenuous claims to CAR citizenship. END NOTE)

¶16. (U) Birth/Marriage Certificates are issued by the city-hall (Mairie) in every big city and are easy to verify from the

records.

¶17. (U) National IDs are issued by the Director General of Police and are digital with bar codes.

¶18. (U) The CAR Government regards visa fraud as a crime and officials are generally cooperative when verifying documents. CARG officials respond clearly and regularly when a document to be verified is fake or fraudulent.

¶19. (U) The CAR Government recently started issuing controlled documents such as Drivers' Licenses. These documents as well as the ID cards are issued on numerical cards with bar codes (similar to many U.S. Drivers' Licenses) and are not easy to be reproduced. Nonetheless, Diplomatic/official passport issuance is a major concern and is not/not under surveillance. Almost anyone can apply and obtain a CAR official/diplomatic passport. Areas of Concern

¶20. (U) Many CAR Passport applicants who have no claim to diplomatic or official status receive diplomatic or official passports. Some CAR diplomatic passport holders may only have tenuous claims to CAR citizenship.

¶21. (U) Staffing and training: Officer and LES FPU staff:

- David Wisner, Consular Officer. Fraud prevention received during General Consular Training in Washington, DC in 2008. Departure expected February 2011.

- Jean-Baptiste Boby, Consular Assistant: No fraud prevention training received.

- Victor Bead, Security/Investigator Assistant, No fraud prevention training received.

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